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FOR IO/SHA, DRL/MLA, L/HRR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM UNCHR UNCHR

SUBJECT: UN-CHR REFORM DISCUSSION IN GENEVA; MODALITIES FOR AN ECOSOC-APPROVED INFORMAL SESSION

1. This is an action request. Please see paragraph 3.

2. ECOSOC's approval on June 9 of the revised version of CHR-61 decision 2005/116 -- now calling for an informal, open ended 2-day session to discuss Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and UN reform in Geneva -- opens the door for Secretariat and Bureau planning of this event. The

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Secretariat has proposed June 16 and 17 for the meeting, as

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these are "cost-free" days for conference services, and has distributed the text of the decision as adopted (repeated in paragraph 4) and a note on the proposed modalities for the meeting (repeated in paragraph 5). The text of the decision and the note on modalities, both written some weeks ago, refer to a June 15 deadline for the transmittal of a Chair's Summary of the session to the President of the General Assembly (GA). The CHR Chair will inform his ECOSOC counterpart that he will forward his summary to GA Chair Ping by 21 June, the date on which Ping has apparently scheduled a formal GA session to discuss his latest draft proposal.

3. ACTION REQUEST: Mission requests guidance on whether to attend this session, as well as guidance on any statement(s) that may be deemed necessary in connection with this meeting.

4. Begin text of ECOSOC-approved decision:

The Economic and Social Council, bearing in mind the General Assembly resolutions A/59/145 and A/59/291 which, inter alia, requested the President of the General Assembly to continue to hold open, inclusive and transparent consultations with all Member States, with a view to reaching the broadest possible agreement on all major issues relating to the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005, and also taking note of the Commission on Human Rights decision 2005/116 of 22 April 2005, decides to request the Chairperson of the sixty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights to organize, an open-ended informal consultations of up to 2 days, to reflect on the recommendations on human rights contained in the report of the Secretary General (A/59/2005), with a view to contributing to the intergovernmental deliberations on the proposed reforms of the United Nations in the General Assembly, and to this end, decides to authorize the Chairperson to prepare a summary of the consultations by June 15, 2005 to be transmitted to the President of the General Assembly through the President of ECOSOC.
End text of decision.

5. Begin text of note on modalities for the meeting:

Proposed modalities for informal consultations on the recommendations on human rights contained in the SG reform report (A/59/2005)

Note from the Secretariat

1. Date and location: The 2-day informal consultations will, if the relevant decision is approved by ECOSOC, take place on 9 and 10 June 2005 in Rooms XXVI and XVIII, respectively. (NOTE: These dates have been replaced by 16 and 17 June, as ECOSOC did not approve the decision until after COB Geneva-time on 9 June.)

2. Participants: Further to the ECOSOC (draft) (now adopted) decision, the Chairperson is expected to organize an 'open-ended informal consultations of up to 2 days'. Accordingly, all participants to the CHR session should be able to attend and participate in the informal consultations. As is the case for Intergovernmental Working Groups, this would include Member States and all Observers, without any distinction.

3. Speaking time limits: Given the emphasis made on the words 'informal' and 'consultations', it is considered that there should be no formal speaking-time limits but that participants should be encouraged to be as brief as possible to enable everybody to make a contribution to the debate and to enhance the interactive and informal nature of the meeting.

14. Programme of work: The ECOSOC (draft) (now adopted) decision indicates that the consultations should aim at reflecting on 'the recommendations on human rights contained in the report of the SG (A/59/2005). Such recommendations can be found in paragraphs 140 to 147 and 181 to 183 of the report. It would thus be logical to structure the discussion along the following three main issues mentioned in the report:

I. CHR reform / new Human Rights Council (A/59/2005, paras. 146 and 181 to 183)

- Status and composition of the new body (elections by the GA; location; standing body; rules of procedure; agenda; organization of work; participation of observers;...)
- Role and functions of the new body (peer-review system; emergency situations; global report; normative and implementation functions; reporting lines to the GA; etc.)
- Status/continuation of existing mechanisms and arrangements (rules of procedure/working methods; CHR agenda; special procedures; 1503 procedure, Sub-Commission; consultative arrangements with NGOs,...)
- Transitional arrangements/timeframe (interim period and arrangements; timeframe in transition to the new body; etc.)

II. OHCHR / HC Plan of Action (A/59/2005, paras. 140 to 145)

- strengthening the Office / resources and staff
- more active role in Security Council/proposed Peacebuilding Commission

III. Treaty bodies reform (A/59/2005, para. 147)

- Harmonized guidelines on reporting;
- Unified system of treaty bodies

15. Conduct of the meeting: In order to facilitate the preparation and conduct of the meeting, a group of friends of the Chairperson has been established, the composition of which is similar to that of the Expanded Bureau. The conduct of the meeting will be organized by the Chairperson and will involve the facilitating of the meeting by two members of the group.

16. Outcome of the meeting: According to the (draft) decision, the Chairperson is authorized, with a view to contributing to the intergovernmental deliberations on the proposed reforms of the United Nations in the General Assembly, to prepare a summary of the consultations by 15 June. Given the timeframe envisaged, the summary will contain an account of the main issues discussed during the meeting distributed along the main issues envisaged above but without attribution to a particular country or a group of countries. End text of note.
Moley